

Appendix B1: Sentinel Complaint Categories

Advance-Fee Loans and Credit Protection/Repair Offers: The promise of a loan that requires you to pay a fee first; worthless credit card loss protection and insurance programs; the promise that accurate negative information can be removed from your credit file for a fee; etc.
Business Opportunities and Work-at-Home Plans: Medical billing scams; misleading franchise and Internet-based business opportunities; wealth building plans that don't make good on their promises; etc.
Debt Management/Credit Counseling: Unfulfilled promises by credit counseling organizations to provide free services, send payments to creditors in a timely manner, or reduce interest rates on credit card debt, eliminate late and over-the-limit fees; etc.
Foreign Money Offers: Letters or e-mails offering the "opportunity" to share in a percentage of millions of dollars that a self-proclaimed government official is trying to transfer illegally out of a foreign country in return for money, bank account numbers, or other identifying information from the victim.
Health Care: Fraudulent, misleading, or deceptive claims for vision correction procedures; dietary supplements; weight loss products or services; impotency treatments; health spas and equipments; infertility services; sunscreens; HIV test kits; etc.
Identity Theft: When someone appropriates your personal identifying information (like your Social Security number or credit card account number) to commit fraud or theft.
Internet Auctions: Non-delivery of goods; delivery of goods that are less valuable than advertised; lack of delivery in a timely way; failure to disclose all the relevant information about the product or terms of the sale; etc.
Internet Services and Computers: Trial offers from Internet Service Providers ("ISPs"); difficulty canceling an ISP account; undisclosed Web site charges; problems with computer software and equipment purchases; and spyware.
Investments: Promises of riches that don't pan out in day trading; oil and gas leases; gold and gems; FCC licenses; etc.
Magazines and Buyers Clubs: Pitches for "free," "pre-paid," or "special" magazine subscription deals and offers for club memberships that claim to help you save money when buying a particular product or service (CDs, books, etc.).
Multi-Level Marketing/Pyramids/Chain Letters: Network plans that offer commissions on the sale of goods by you and distributors you recruit.
Office Supplies and Services: Fraudulent or deceptive offers for toner, copier paper, maintenance supplies, equipment maintenance contracts; classified advertising and yellow page invoice scams; website cramming schemes; etc.
Prizes/Sweepstakes and Lotteries: Promotions for "free" prizes for a fee; foreign lotteries and sweepstakes offered through the phone, fax, e-mail or mail; etc.
Shop-At-Home/Catalog Sales: Problems, such as undisclosed costs, failure to deliver on time, non-delivery, and refusal to honor a guarantee, with purchases made via the Internet (not including auction sales), telephone, or mail.
Telephone Services: Charges for calls to "toll-free" numbers; unauthorized charges such as charges for calls consumers didn't make; unauthorized switching of consumers' phone service provider; misleading pre-paid phone card offers; etc.
Travel, Vacation and Timeshare Plans: Deceptive offers for "free" or low-cost vacations; cut-rate student travel packages; misleading timeshare offers; etc.
"Other" complaint categories are: Employment agencies/job counseling, charitable solicitations, government services, real estate, scholarships/educational grants, modeling agencies/services, green card application services, dating services, property/inheritance tracers, water purifiers, living trusts, and viaticals.